

(B) AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims in accordance with the following complete listing of all claims in the application:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A system for accessing and storing data pertaining to inspection and maintenance of an equipment unit, said system comprising:

(a) a portable computing device having a memory and a user interface whereby a user may enter user-defined data and commands into said memory;

(b) one or more memory buttons, each ~~said memory button being adapted to permit electronic storage of data therein, and to permit reading of data stored therein~~ comprising:

b.1 a read-write memory chip, said memory chip having stored therein a unique and unalterable identification number; and

b.2 an armoured container encasing the memory chip and comprising contact means electrically connected to the memory chip;

(c) a memory button probe, said probe being ~~adapted for transferring data to, and for reading data stored in, the said one or more memory buttons~~ electronically connectable to the portable computing device by means of a first data link, said memory button probe having contact means adapted for contacting engagement with the contact means of a selected memory button so as to transfer data from the portable computing device to the selected memory button, or from the selected memory button to the portable computing device, as desired;

~~(e) a portable computing device having a memory;~~

~~(d) a first data transfer link, whereby the portable computing device is in electronic communication with the memory button probe;~~

(d e) a central computer having a database for storing data relating to the equipment unit, said central computer being at a location remote from the equipment unit; and

(e f) a second data transfer link, whereby the portable computing device is in electronic communication with the central computer and database;

wherein each memory button is mounted on or in the equipment unit, in proximity to a selected component of the equipment unit.

Claim 2 (original): The system of claim 1 wherein the portable computing device is a personal digital assistant.

Claim 3 (original): The system of claim 1 wherein the portable computing device is a laptop computer.

Claim 4 (original): The system of claim 1 wherein the second data transfer link is a wireless data transfer link.

Claim 5 (original): The system of claim 4 wherein the wireless data transfer link is a wireless connection through a computer network.

Claim 6 (original): The system of claim 4 wherein the wireless data transfer link is a connection through a telecommunications satellite system.

Claim 7 (original): The system of claim 1 wherein the central computer is a computer network server.

Claim 8 (original): The system of claim 7 wherein the computer network server is protected by a firewall.

Claim 9 (original): The system of claim 1 wherein the equipment unit is an aircraft.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A method of storing and retrieving inspection and maintenance information regarding an equipment unit, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a portable computing device having a memory and a user interface whereby a user may enter user-defined data and commands into said memory;
- (~~b~~ a) ~~providing a memory button, said memory button being adapted to permit electronic storage of data therein, and to permit reading of data stored therein~~ button comprising:
 - b.1 a read-write memory chip, said memory chip having stored therein a unique and unalterable identification number; and
 - b.2 an armoured container encasing the memory chip and comprising contact means electrically connected to the memory chip;
- (~~c~~ b) ~~installing said memory button on or in the equipment unit in convenient proximity to a selected inspection and maintenance point~~ component of the equipment unit;
- (~~d~~ e) ~~providing a memory button probe adapted for transferring data to, and for reading data stored in, the memory button~~ probe, said probe being electronically connectable to the portable computing device by means of a first data link, said memory button probe having contact means adapted for contacting engagement with the contact means of the memory button so as to transfer data from the portable computing device to the memory button, or from the memory button to the portable computing device, as desired;
- (~~d~~) ~~providing a portable computing device having a memory, and having a first data transfer link whereby said portable computing device is in electronic communication with the memory button probe;~~

- (e) providing, at a location remote from the equipment unit, a central computer having a database, said central computer having a second data transfer link whereby the central computer is in electronic communication with the portable computing ~~device~~, device, and said database having technical information relating to the equipment unit stored therein;
- ~~(f) as desired, storing technical information relating to the equipment unit in the database;~~
- ~~(g) as desired, storing technical information relating to the equipment unit in the memory button;~~
- ~~(h) as desired, engaging the memory button probe with the memory button, so as to read selected data stored therein, and to transmit said selected data via said first data transfer link to the portable computing device;~~
- ~~(i) as desired, transmitting a signal from the portable computing device to the central computer via said second data transfer link, instructing the central computer to transmit selected data from the database to the portable computing device via the second data transfer link;~~
- (fj) performing an inspection or maintenance task on the equipment unit;
- (g k) entering task performance information into the portable computing device relating to the performance of said inspection or maintenance task; and
- (h l) engaging the contact means of the memory button probe with the contact means of the memory button so as to electronically transmitting transmit a signal, corresponding to said task performance information, from the portable computing device to the memory button, via said first data transfer link and the memory button probe, so as to store said task performance information on the memory button. ~~button, and~~

~~(m) electronically transmitting a signal, corresponding to said task performance information, from the portable computing device to the central computer, via said second data transfer link, so as to store said task performance information in the database.~~

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 10 wherein the portable computing device is a personal digital assistant.

Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 10 wherein the portable computing device is a laptop computer.

Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 10 wherein the second data transfer link is a wireless data transfer link.

Claim 14 (original): The method of claim 13 wherein the wireless data transfer link is a wireless connection through a computer network.

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 13 wherein the wireless data transfer link is a connection through a telecommunications satellite system.

Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 10 wherein the central computer is a computer network server.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 16 wherein the computer network server is protected by a firewall.

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of accessing the database of the computer network server from a user computer via connection to a computer network.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of downloading data from the database of the computer network server and storing a back-up copy of the data on the user computer.

Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 10 wherein the equipment unit is an aircraft.

Claim 21 (new): The method of claim 10 comprising the further step of transmitting a signal from the portable computing device to the central computer via said second data transfer link, instructing the central computer to transmit selected technical information from the database to the portable computing device via the second data transfer link.

Claim 22 (new): The method of claim 21 comprising the further step of transferring technical information from the portable computing device to the memory button by engaging the memory button probe with the memory button.

Claim 23 (new): The method of claim 10 comprising the further step of engaging the memory button probe with the memory button, so as to read selected data stored therein, and to transmit said selected data via said first data transfer link to the portable computing device.

Claim 24 (new): The method of claim 10 comprising the further step of electronically transmitting a signal, corresponding to said task performance information, from the portable computing device to the central computer, via said second data transfer link, so as to store said task performance information in the database.

Claim 25 (new): A method of storing and retrieving inspection and maintenance information regarding an equipment unit, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a portable computing device having a memory and a user interface whereby a user may enter user-defined data and commands into said memory;
- (b) providing a memory button comprising:
 - b.1 a read-write memory chip, said memory chip having stored therein a unique and unalterable identification number; and
 - b.2 an armoured container encasing the memory chip and comprising contact means electrically connected to the memory chip;

- (c) installing said memory button on or in the equipment unit in proximity to a selected component of the equipment unit;
- (d) providing a memory button probe, said probe being electronically connectable to the portable computing device by means of a first data link, said memory button probe having contact means adapted for contacting engagement with the contact means of the memory button so as to transfer data from the portable computing device to the memory button, or from the memory button to the portable computing device, as desired;
- (e) providing, at a location remote from the equipment unit, a central computer having a database, said central computer having a second data transfer link whereby the central computer is in electronic communication with the portable computing device, and said database having technical information relating to the equipment unit stored therein;
- (f) transmitting a signal from the portable computing device to the central computer via said second data transfer link, instructing the central computer to transmit, from the database to the portable computing device via the second data transfer link, selected technical information relating to an inspection or maintenance task pertaining to the selected component of the equipment unit;
- (g) transferring said technical information from the portable computing device to the memory button by engaging the memory button probe with the memory button;
- (h) performing said inspection or maintenance task on the equipment unit;
- (i) entering task performance information into the portable computing device relating to the performance of said inspection or maintenance task;

- (j) engaging the contact means of the memory button probe with the contact means of the memory button so as to electronically transmit a signal, corresponding to said task performance information, from the portable computing device to the memory button, via said first data transfer link and the memory button probe, so as to store said task performance information on the memory button; and
- (k) electronically transmitting a signal, corresponding to said task performance information, from the portable computing device to the central computer, via said second data transfer link, so as to store said task performance information in the database.